COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED SUPPRESSION OF *AMPHISBAENA MILDEI* PETERS, 1878. Z.N.(S.) 1746

(see volume 23, pages 162–163)

By Hobart M. Smith (*Department of Zoology and Museum of Natural History, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A.*)

The data presented by Gans on the history of the name *Amphisbaena mildei* Peters leave no question that the best interests of stability of nomenclature, in reference both the past events and possible future developments, are served by suppression of Peter's name. This specific proposal (8a, c, p. 163) has my strong endorsement.

However, in reference to the proposed entry of *Amphisbaena trachura* Cope, 1885, on the Official List, it should be pointed out that the security of *trachura* is, according to data given by Gans, assured by elimination of *mildei* Peters. If additional effort to assure nomenclatural stability is expended for this group it more appropriately should be directed toward conservation of the most nomenclaturally important names—in this case presumably *Amphisbaena darwini* Duméril and Bibron, 1839. The " Official List " of 1958 (pp. vii–viii) deals with some of the hazards of conservation of subspecific names and directs that where any species-group name proposed for conservation is applicable to a paranominate subspecies, " there should at the same time be placed on the Official List the specific name of the species of which, in the opinion of some specialists, the taxon bearing the other name should be regarded as being a subspecies ".

Accordingly I strongly urge that either *trachura* not be added to the Official List, or that the name *Amphisbaena darwini* Duméril and Bibron, 1839, be simultaneously added.

Although the introduction to the 1958 Official List of Specific Names clarifies a number of questions, it does not make clearly evident whether a conserved species-group name is ever to be regarded *ipso facto* as having nomenclatural priority over earlier conspecific name applied to other subspecies of the same species. Automatic priority carries the penalty of replacement of older names for the species, where applied to a different subspecies, or where a worker refuses to recognize subspecies. Absence of priority carries the penalty of permitting conserved names to exist as junior synonyms of older names. The relative status of two or more conserved names, conspecific but not consubspecific, remains to be clarified.

By H. Wermuth (*Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart, Germany*)

As former curator of herpetology at the Zoological Museum of Berlin I wish to verify that the type specimen of *A. mildei* has been separated from its label by an accident and that it got among other amphisbaenid material. In consequence of this fact, there seems to be very poor prospect of its reidentification. Considering these circumstances and the others noted by Gans, I urgently ask the Commission to grant the request of Dr. Gans and to place the name *Amphisbaena mildei* Peters, 1878, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid specific Names in Zoology.

AMENDMENT TO APPLICATION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF *AMPHISBAENA MILDEI* PETERS, 1878

By Carl Gans (*State University of New York at Buffalo, New York* 14214, *U.S.A.*)

In view of the circumstances adduced by Dr. Smith, and also of the admittedly incomplete status of our knowledge of these uncommonly collected animals, I would urge that the name *Amphisbaena trachura* not be added to the Official List.